

264 SOME CUSTOMS OF THE PELEW ISLANDERS NOTEIV

Other cases of the inter- female costume. Con- clusion. The systemat- ic prostitu- tion of unmarrie- d girls for hire in the Pelew Islands seems to be a form of sexual commun- ism and of group- marriage

intended to disguise the wearers against demons, we may compare the practice of the Lycian men, who regularly wore women's dress in Burning;^x for this might be Intended to conceal them from the ghost, just as perhaps for a similar reason some peoples of antiquity used to descend into pits and remain there for several days, shunning the light of the sun, whenever a death had taken place in the family.² A similar desire to deceive spirits may perhaps explain a device to which the Loeboes, a primitive tribe of Sumatra, resort when they wish to obtain male or female offspring. If parents have several sons and desire that the next child shall be a girl, they dress the boys as girls, cut their hair after the girlish fashion, and hang neck- laces round their necks. On the contrary, when they have many daughters and wish to have a son, they dress the girls up as boys.³ On the whole we conclude that the custom of men dressing as women and of women dressing as men has been practised from a variety of superstitious motives, among which the principal would seem to be the wish to please certain powerful spirits or to deceive others,

§ 2. Prostitution of Unmarried Girls

Like many peoples of Western Asia in antiquity, the Pelew Islanders systematically prostitute their unmarried girls for hire. Hence, just as in Lycia and Cyprus of old, the damsels are a source of income to their family, and women wait impatiently for the time when their young daughters will be able to help the house- hold by their earnings. Indeed the mother regularly anticipates the time by depriving the girl of her virginity with her own hands.⁴ Hence the theory that the prostitution of unmarried girls is a device to destroy their virginity without risk to their husbands is just as inapplicable to the Pelew Islanders as we have seen. It to be to the peoples of Western Asia in antiquity. When a Pelew girl has thus been prepared for her vocation by her mother, she sells her

favour own exogamous clan; but she never
s to all grants her favours to the same man twice.
the Accordingly in every
men of village of the Pelew Islands it may be taken as
her certain that the
village men and women know each other carnally, except
who that members
can of the same clan are debarred from each other by
pay for the rule of
them exogamy.⁵ Thus a well-marked form of sexual
and communism, limited
who only by the exogamous prohibitions which attach to the
do not clans, prevails
belong among these people. Nor is this communism restricted
to her to the inhabit-

¹ Plutarch,
Consolatio ad Apollonium
22 ; Valerius Maximus, ii. 6. 13.

² Plutarch, Lc.

³ J. Kreemer, "De
Loeboes in
Mandailing," Bijdragen tot de
Taal-

Land- en Volkenkunde van Neder-
landsch-Indie, lxvi. (1912) p. 317.

⁴ J. Kubary, Die sozialen Einrich-
tungen der Pelaiier pp. 50 sq,

⁶ J. Kubary, op. tit. p. 51.